DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 146 958 JC 770 536

TITLE	Marketing Strategies, 1977-1978.
INSTITUTION	Prince George's Community Coll., Largo, Md.
PUB DATE	15 Aug 77
NOTE	37p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Students; Community Colleges; Community Services; Delivery Systems; Educational Needs; Educational Strategies; Guides; *Junior Colleges; *Marketing; Models; Needs Assessment; *Outreach Programs; Program Evaluation; *Publicize; *Student Recruitment

ABSTRACT

This paper, prepared by a task force comprised of representative faculty members of Prince George's Community College, presents a conceptual outline for a "marketing process" which emphasizes assessing community and individual needs and then providing services responsive to those needs. The model considers both marketing strategies aimed at subpopulations of prospective students and retention strategies aimed at currently enrolled students. The marketing process is divided into four interrelated stages: (1) service, which involves the identification of what service and/or programs are provided for whom; (2) promotion, which involves the examination of the promotional message as it is intended and as it is received, and the capability of the college to respond to those acting upon the message; (3) delivery, which identifies and develops instructional modes, selects schedules and locations of instruction, and designs strategies to increase the retention range; and (4) evaluation, involving data gathering and market research which is essential for implementation of the marketing process. Specific strategies derived from application of the process to the college service area, a bibliography, and a Marketing Strategy Proposal Form are included. (KJC)

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MARKETING STRATEGIES

1977 - 1978

SUBMITTED BY

THE MARKETING TASK FORCE

AUGUST 15, 1977

PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE
301 LARGO ROAD
LARGO, MARYLAND 20870

JC 770 536

PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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FOREWARD

In December 1976, an ad hoc group of approximately twenty persons representing areas of Prince George's Community College that have responsibility for contacting prospective students was convened to examine college-wide outreoch efforts. The brainstorming ideas suggested by this group were prioritized and shared with the President and the Deans. It was recommended that a Task Force on Marketing Strategies be appointed with representation from: Arts and Sciences faculty, Technical and Career Education faculty, Evening and Community Education faculty, Student Affairs, Community Information, College Publications and the Student Governance Board.

The Thrust of the Task Force was twofold: (1) to identify subpopulations of prospective students as target markets, and (2) to develop market strategies to respond to those target markets. Initially, the emphasis was placed on recruitment of additional students. As work progressed, increasing concern was focused on the attrition behavior of currently enrolled students and recommendations include retention strategies[1] as well as the original emphasis upon recruitment strategies.

Although relatively little attention has been given to "marketing management" within higher education, the discipline of marketing provides a perspective for institutional renewal and the development of strategies for creating a climate that is more sensitive to the needs of student consumers.

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[1]Retention Strategies refer to institutional practices designed to prevent students from dropping out of college for invalid reasons. At no time is the term retention used to imply impeding a student's academic progress or lowering of academic standards.

The following paper summarizes that marketing perspective, identifies populations within the service area which comprise potential markets for the college, presents promotion and delivery strategies for immediate implementation and suggests a time frame for follow-up and evaluation.

Members of the Task Force

Dr. Ernest R. Leach, Dean of Student Affairs, Chairperson

Mr. John Wiley, Program Director, Community & School Articulation

Ms. Barbara Sanders, Counselor, Department of Human Development

Dr. Gerald Hanberry, Director, Community Resources Development and Special Programs

Mr. David James, Director, Extension Centers

Dr. Peter Burnham, Associate Professor, Developmental Studies

Mr. David Shore, Associate Dean, Instructional Development

Mr. Kalman Vozar, Associate Dean, Business Technology

Mr. Albert Zickler, Assistant Professor, Engineering Technology

Dr. Carol Breyer, Director, College Publications

Mr. Robert Boucher, Director, Community Information

Mr. James Luck, Student Affairs Representative, Student Governance Board

Ms. Suzanne Gell, Student Affairs Division

THE MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

Public educators, who have been occupied since the sixties with meeting the demands of increasing enrollments, have given little attention to marketing concerns. Moreover, most of the leadership in higher education, including the community college, follows a traditional model of educational planning which includes the following components: (1) enrollment projections; (2) budgets; and (3) facilities/space planning and development. This model and its adaptations do not consider necessarily the unique needs and interests of individuals, agencies and institutions within the community nor the responsibility of the college to respond to these needs.

Product Philosophy

To compound the problem, many college staff members view the term "marketing" as being loaded with negative connotations of hucksterism, fast-pitch artists and slick brochures. Those who have embraced the marketing concept as appropriate for higher education, too often do so within the context of the more traditional "product philosophy". This approach assumes that the present product is what the student needs and the marketing function is to aggressively promote that product. Yet others, often in the same institution, believe that it is unethical to "sell" education. This "selling of the school" infers that if a person "buys" the product there will be a guaranteed job or other tangible reward.

Marketing Process

In contrast to the traditional "product philosophy", this paper and the accompanying proposals will present a "marketing process" which emphasizes first assessing community and individual needs and wants and then providing services to meet those

needs and wants. In the words of Peter Drucker, "The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that...service fits him and sells itself."[2]

In this context the concept of marketing becomes not just a cookbook of promotional or product development strategies but rather a conceptual perspective which permeates every aspect of the college. It is a way of thinking about one's individual responsibilities in responding first to the needs and wishes of the student consumer and secondly to the needs of the institution. Within this framework, it is imperative that the College consider both promotion and delivery strategies including the content and format of informational services, appropriate learning delivery systems, the serviceability of the environment and the attitudes of members of the College community which influence the quality of interactions with students.

The following will outline four general interdependent stages in this marketing process: service, promotion, delivery and evaluation. Each of these stages will be discussed briefly by either presenting some important questions to be raised or actions to be taken.

Stage 1 - Service

This stage involves the identification of what service and/or programs are provided for whom. This discovery and description of populations and "market segments" can include such factors as age, numbers of eligible people in each segment, "mean-standard driving times" to a location, zip code areas, and proximity of home-to-work-to-college. Finally, this stage includes a thorough needs analysis

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[2]Drucker, p. 217.

focusing upon the question of what people and community institutions need and want, what their images and attitudes are about the College, and the potential quality of the service to the community.

Stage 2 - Promotion

Promotion of the College's mission, programs and services can occur in a variety of ways, including paid advertising, free publicity, and personal communication by the College staff. Any form of contact with the community creates a college image, positive or negative. Therefore, careful attention must be given to: (1) message intended; (2) the message received; (3) the "readability" and comprehension level of the message; and (4) the capability of the College to respond to those who act on the message.

Stage 3 - Delivery

The primary elements of this stage are: (1) identification and development of a variety of instructional modes; (2) selection and matching varied schedules with these instructional modes; (3) development of ideal locations and times; (4) design and coordination of support systems, i.e., orientation, diagnosis, prescription, and counseling; and (5) design of strategies, including individual services and learning experiences, credit and non-credit, which increase the "holding power" of the College and which maintain an effective degree of communication with the community.

Stage 4 - Evaluation

An effective system of data gathering and market research is imperative for implementing the marketing process. Evaluation should occur in all of the preceding

three stages and might include the following assessment indices: percentage of population served; representativeness of potential market in present enrollment; geographical accessibility of programs; relationship of course offerings to community interests; competitiveness of pricing with other institutions; comparative program costs within the institution; readability of college publications; most effective media for contacting prospective students; course and program completion ratios; number of job placements; and customer satisfaction. A systematic process of evaluation should support improved decision-making about changing service needs and the effectiveness of promotion and delivery strategies.

The following sections will address three stages of this marketing process: "service", including identification of potential market segments; "promotion", including strategies for expanding the College's mission of service to the community; and "delivery", including strategies for retention of presently enrolled students.

SERVICE

Service Indices

Although Prince George's Community College serves about 34% of all college-bound high school graduates in the County, the service index for all County residents is far below that of the community colleges in adjacent counties. In Prince George's County, 1.63% of the population is enrolled in college credit classes at the Community College. The comparable statistics for neighboring counties are: Anne Arundel 1.87%, Montgomery 2.15%, and Charles 3.07%.[3] The 1970 census data revealed that the

[3]Statewide Master Plan for Community Colleges in Maryland, p. 173.

median number of school years completed for males 25 years and older is 12.6 for Prince George's County and 15.0 for Montgomery County. More intensive efforts are needed to acquaint Prince George's citizens with opportunities for post-secondary education.

Changing Student Profile

There has been a dramatic change in the profile of the student body at Prince George's Community College during the past five years. The characteristics showing most significant change are:[4]

	1972	1976
Age		
Under 21 years of age	45%	38%
26 years or older	28%	38%
Enrollment		
Part-time	56%	66%
Race		
Black	15%	29%
Sex		
Female	46%	54%

These changes reflect the increasing demand for learning and support services that are responsive to the needs of a student population that is increasingly older, part-time, minority and female.

[4]Larkin, Institutional Research Reports, Nos. 60 and 76-14.

Target Markets

A community college with a commitment to "open door" admissions has an educational imperative to aggressively extend the boundaries of educational opportunity to community citizens who traditionally have been denied access to higher education. These "new students" include mature adults, women, minorities, and those who come from educationally and financially impoverished home backgrounds. These groups, together with the more traditional sources of potential students, have been listed in four categories of potential target markets based on type of contact with the College rather than population demographics.

Prince George's Community College Students

a. Currently enrolled full-time, part-time credit students

b. Currently enrolled Community Services (non-credit) students

c. Previously enrolled credit and non-credit students (alumni)

d. Families of students

Prospective Customer Initiated Contacts

a. Persons who write for information

b. Persons who telephone for information

c. Persons who visit the College

College Initiated Contacts with Community Adults

a. Public library traffic

b. Shopping mall traffic

c. Bank traffic

d. Business employees

e. Teachers

f. Non-teaching public school personnel

g. Nurses

h. Hotel-motel personnel

i. Apartment managers

j. Senior citizens

k. Members of service clubs and associations

l. Government agency employees

m. Church attenders

n. Retired military personnel

o. Active military personnel

p. Incarcerated persons

q. Adults facing mid-life career change

r. Veterans

s. Homemakers

High School Students

a. High school students

b. Junior high school students

c. Faculty and counselors

d. Parents

PROMOTION

Promotion is often considered to be synonymous with marketing when in fact it is only one stage of the marketing process. In contrast to the traditional "hard sell", greater attention must be directed toward providing students with adequate information upon which to make informed choices about educational programs and expected consumer outcomes for completion of those programs. In addition, promotional activities should provide valuable market research data on the effectiveness of current programs and on future program needs.

A variety of marketing strategies were suggested by the Task Force as possible responses to the identified market segments. Some of these strategies require only minor modifications in current operating procedures while others need college-wide review and involve commitment of additional College resources. Out of a long list of suggested possibilities, the following promotion strategies have been approved for implementation.

Responsibility for each project has been assigned together with a completion date and identification of additional funds that will be needed for implementation. These are in addition to the regular on-going promotional activities such as visits to high schools, paid advertising, news releases, radio announcements and brochures.

PROMOTION STRATEGIES

Target Markets	Strategy	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Cost[a]
P.G.C.C. students	Promote credit courses with Community Service students	Dr. Breyer	January 1978	$ 1,100.
	Centralize all College mailing lists	Dr. Breyer	Fall 1977	--
Customer initiated Contacts	Staff College information booth in Bladen Hall	Dr. Busky	Fall 1977	--
	Prepare outdoor directory signs for all College buildings	Mr. Hardwick	Fall 1977	--
	Communication Skills Workshop for registration and admissions personnel	Mr. Seldomridge	Spring 1977	--
	Install special telephones for registration information	Mr. Weaver	August 1977	--
Contacts with Community Adults	Promote College programs with senior citizens	Dr. Fiorentano	Spring 1978	867.
	Inform County residents of daily & weekend events on campus	Dr. Hanberry	September 1977	280.

[a]Only those costs in addition to the previously approved FY 1978 budget are listed.

PROMOTION STRATEGIES

Target Markets	Strategy	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Cost[a]
Contacts with Community Adults (cont.)	Contact all city mayors in P.G. County	Mr. Wiley	Summer 1977	--
	Information centers in County shopping malls	Mr. Wiley	Summer 1977	--[b]
	Information centers in County libraries	Mr. Wiley	Summer 1977	--
	Send letters and brochures to all County churches	Mr. Wiley	Spring 1978	--
	Send letters to all County civic associations	Mr. Wiley	Spring 1977	--
	Prepare general information posters for libraries, banks & businesses	Mr. Wiley	July 1977	320.
	Prepare combined class schedule for mailing to all homes in County	Dr. Breyer	November 1977 May 1978	$ 7,370. 2,000

[a]Only those costs in addition to the previously approved FY 1978 Budget are listed.

[b]Total cost for 18 weeks FY 1977 and FY 1978 - $5,761.

PROMOTION STRATEGIES

Target Markets	Strategy	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Cost
Contacts with Community Adults (cont.)	Mail fall semester registration brochure to all County residents	Dr. Breyer	August 1977	--
	Reprint curriculum brochures	Dr. Breyer	November 1977	$ 2,340.
	Information booth at County fair	Mr. Boucher	August 1977	--
High school students	Host College/Career Fair for high school student on campus	Mr. Wiley	Spring 1978	300.
	Prepare slide presentation on College	Mr. Wiley	August 1977	--
	Schedule divisional and departmental articulation meetings with County school faculty	Dr. Kuhn Dean Wise	Spring 1978	--
	Send letters to 3,000 graduating seniors	Mr. Wiley	Summer 1977	--
	Host luncheon for all County school principals	Mr. Boucher	Spring 1977	--

DELIVERY

Delivery is the key to an effective marketing process that is dependent upon repeat business and customer satisfaction. The best promotional efforts will be ineffective unless the College can deliver learning and support services that students want at times and locations that are convenient for them.

Cope and Hannah report that about two students in ten entering community colleges stay on to complete the requirements for an associate degree and one in ten goes on to complete the requirements for a baccalaureate degree.[5] The failure of such a high percentage of students to meet entrance objectives represents not only a loss of institutional resources but a waste of human resources invested by the unsuccessful students.

Although there is little agreement as to what constitutes true attrition in an era when "stopping in" and "stopping out" has become an acceptable educational behavior, two specific indices are used to describe the attrition experience at Prince George's Community College.

Between-Term Attrition

The attrition index most clearly affecting credit hours is the number of students not returning from the previous term. This "between-term" attrition for fall-spring has been approximately 34% for the past five years. Spring-fall attrition has been approximately 47% during the same five year period. In actual numbers, this represents approximately 5,400 students not returning spring-fall and 4,100 not returning fall-spring.[6]

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[5]Cope and Hannah, p. 2.

[6]Larkin, Institutional Research Report, No. 77-11.

Within-Term Attrition

From the perspective of the students, "within-term" attrition represents a more serious problem. This index, as used here, includes all unsuccessfully completed courses within an academic semester. This has been described by Larkin[7] as the "non pass" or "inefficiency" rate. The "inefficiency" rate at Prince George's Community College represents approximately 27% of all courses attempted and has been a constant ratio during the past five years.

These two attrition indices provide a potent catalyst for re-examination, from a marketing perspective, of the selection of programs of study, courses to be offered, the way in which offerings are packaged and presented to students, including time and place, and the types of learning support systems available to students. Many of the delivery strategies which follow are aimed at reducing unwarranted attrition. Astin has observed that

> "While administrators and faculty have traditionally seen recruitment as the principal means to keeping enrollment up, an equally promising approach is to reduce dropout rates...Investing resources to prevent dropping out may be more 'cost effective' than applying the same resources to more vigorous recruitment."[8]

Successful implementation of delivery strategies will depend upon the commitment and creative thinking of the faculty, counselors, advisors and others who are responsible for direct delivery of learning and support services to students. The following list of strategies planned for immediate implementation is representative of the kinds of activities which may make the College more responsive to the needs of student consumers.

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Astin, p. 2.

DELIVERY STRATEGIES

Type	Strategy	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Cost[a]
Learning	Revise course syllabi to include expected instructional outcomes	Dr. Kuhn	Spring 1978	--
	Internship programs for Arts & Sciences students	Dr. Kuhn	Spring 1978	--
	Offer concurrent enrollment in developmental programs	Dr. Kuhn	Spring 1978	--
	Develop a course in study skills	Dr. Busky Dr. Kuhn	October 1977	$ 200.
	Develop a course in career planning	Dr. Borchard Dean Wise	Fall 1977	--
	Develop a pilot academic skills improvement course for able learners	Dr. Kuhn	Spring 1978	--
	Develop communications skills center (summer & weekend program)	Dr. Kuhn	Summer 1978	--
	Expand tutorial services to support classroom learning	Dr. Kuhn	Spring 1978	

[a]Only those costs in addition to previously approved FY 1978 Budget are listed.

DELIVERY STRATEGIES

Type	Strategy	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Cost
Learning (cont.)	Develop alternative instructional modes for more courses	Dr. Kuhn	On going	--
	Increase number of programs available in learning labs	Dr. Kuhn	On going	--
Support	Develop programmed self-directed registration packet	Dr. Busky	October 1977	--
	Develop audio/visual presentation on registration, general College information & transfer information	Dr. Busky	Summer 1977	--
	Identify undecided students	Dr. Busky	Fall 1977	--
	Implement on-line registration	Mr. Seldomridge Dr. Schwartz	November 1977	--
	Improve procedures for faculty advisement	Dr. Kuhn Dean Wise	Spring 1978	--
	Develop improved faculty advisement manual	Dr. Busky	September 1977	--
	Schedule advisement seminars for faculty	Dr. Busky	October 1977	--

DELIVERY STRATEGIES

Type	Strategy	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Cost[a]
Support (cont.)	Offer diagnostic tests for study skills	Dr. Busky	Fall 1977	--
	Develop self-accessing slide/tape on study skills	Dr. Busky	September 1977	$ 320.
	Implement third week warning letter for non-attenders	Mr. Seldomridge	Fall 1977	--
	Implement career development center	Dr. Borchard	Fall 1977	--[b]
	Develop career planning brochure	Mr. Weaver	Summer 1977	--
	Develop assessment program for career planning	Dr. Borchard	Fall 1977	--
	Implement on-line CVIS (computer vocational information service) program	Dr. Borchard Dr. Schwartz	Fall 1977	--
Outreach	Expand credit offerings in summer sessions	Dr. Florestano	Spring 1978	--

[a]Only those costs in addition to previously approved FY 1978 Budget are listed.

[b]Approved grant application in amount of $35,519 for Title VI funds will provide staffing.

DELIVERY STRATEGIES

Type	Strategy	Person Responsible	Completion Date	Cost
Outreach (cont.)	Expand day and evening credit courses at Goddard Space Center	Dean Wise Mr. James	Fall 1977	--
	Expand day and evening credit courses at County Building in Upper Marlboro	Dean Wise Mr. James	Fall 1977	--
	Conduct needs assessment for more courses at Roosevelt High School	Dean Wise Mr. James	Fall 1977	--
	Expand day and evening course offerings at Andrews Air Force Base	Dr. Florestano Dr. Kuhn Dean Wise	Fall 1977	--
	Increase counseling and advising support at Andrews Air Force Base	Dr. Busky	Fall 1977	--
	Offer credit courses at Friendly High School	Mr. James	Fall 1977	--

EVALUATION

Although evaluation is discussed as a separate stage in the marketing process, it must be an integral part of each of the other stages. The on-going studies of the Office of Institutional Research provide valuable information to support institutional decision-making about current and potential educational service needs within Prince George's County.

The blind faith assumption that "if a little promotion is good, more is better," is insufficient justification for committing limited institutional resources. Careful analyses must be made to determine the relative cost effectiveness of personal contacts, paid media advertising or home-mailed brochures for unique target markets. Moreover, the integrity of the promotional message must be assessed to assure its consistency with the delivery capability of the College and its utility in helping potential students make informed choices about their educational options.

Assessment components which have been designed for promotional strategies contained in this paper include a telephone survey to measure the effectiveness of home-mailed brochures, cross-checking the names of shopping mall and library contacts with actual enrollees, tabulating the number of telephone responses to brochures, and administering questionnaires asking enrollees how they learned about the College.

The lack of sophisticated measurement tools for assessing the effectiveness of learning and support services contributes to the difficulty of evaluating program delivery strategies. Moreover, the confounding influence of several delivery strategies on the same learning outcome makes direct cause and effect relationships difficult to measure.

As noted earlier, however, some gross indices such as "between-term" and "within-term" attrition may provide an indication of the effectiveness of delivery systems. Student satisfaction, course and program completions, schedule changes and job placements are additional indicators that may be useful in the assessment of program effectiveness.

The following Action Time Line indicates that evaluation of the marketing strategies proposed in this paper will begin in October 1977, immediately following enrollment for the fall semester, and continue through March 30, 1979. This will allow for assessment of the impact of these proposals through two fall and two spring semesters. It is anticipated that the feedback from this on-going evaluation process will be useful in modifying some of these strategies, suggesting new strategies and discontinuing those strategies which are not effective.

CONCLUSION

The "marketing process" as presented in this paper outlines a conceptual framework for assessing student needs, for developing promotional and delivery strategies that are responsive to those needs and for evaluating the effectiveness of those strategies. The action proposals have been suggested by Task Force members and others representing all areas of the College. Although a given person or persons are indicated as responsible for each strategy, the successful implementation of these proposals will require the support of the entire College community.

By design the Task Force has used the terminology "marketing process" rather than "marketing effort" or "marketing project". The strategies that have been developed for immediate implementation need careful review by the constituencies,

areas, divisions and departments of the College. It is hoped that these proposals will generate ideas for new strategies which will make the College more responsive to the needs of its present and potential service clientele.

The Marketing Task Force will continue to review proposals and make recommendations to appropriate administrative units for implementation. Any member of the College community may initiate this process by completing a MARKETING STRATEGY PROPOSAL FORM (appendix) and submitting it to the following address:

Marketing Task Force
Dr. Ernest R. Leach, Chairman
Rm. 119, Kent Hall
Prince George's Community College
301 Largo Road
Largo, Maryland 20870

MARKETING STRATEGIES ACTION TIME LINE

FEBRUARY 10, 1977 -- MARCH 30, 1979

PHASE I - PLANNING

February 10, 1977	April 20, 1977	May 4, 1977	May 18, 1977	June 1, 1977
Charge to Task Force	Review First Draft of Position Paper	Establish Priorities for Strategies	Review Final Draft of Position Paper	Position Paper to President

PHASE II - IMPLEMENTATION

June 15, 1977	July 15, 1977	August 1, 1977	August 15, 1977	September 1, 1977 to June 30, 1978
Assign Responsibility for Developing Action Plans	President and Deans Review Action Plans	Approve Action Plans and Commit Resources	Develop Implementation Schedule	Implement Action Plans

PHASE III - EVALUATION

October 1, 1977 -- March 30, 1979

Rev. 4/20

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APPENDIX

MARKETING STRATEGY PROPOSAL FORM

TARGET POPULATION _____

PROJECT GOAL (S) _____

_____

_____

PROJECT MANAGER _____

SUPPORTING AREAS _____

_____

_____

STEPS/PROCEDURES/ASSIGNMENTS Completion Date

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

DEC 29 1977

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES

ESTMATED COSTS (man-hours, dollars, etc.)

Contact Person _____ Tel. _____

Address _____ Date _____